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# How to get best result from a presentation? How to increase effectiveness of a presentation?

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## Abstract

In this work it is explained that which techniques must be used when giving a presentation. The most wanted thing by a speaker(teacher etc...) is increasing effect of the presentation on the audience(pupils, professional groups, etc ...), make the subject of the presentation persistent in a participant way. So in this work all the questions below are answered. How to affect the audience?, how to make information persistent?, what can we do to increase the effect of the presentation? how to use our sound body and facial movements?, Which position of the our hands must be used?, how to choose our outfit?, which technologies must be used?, which material must be used?, how to control our excitement?, how to answer incoming questions?, how must be our wording to the malicious audience?, how to realize what needs of our audience?, what content must be prepared considering audience's professional groups?, what must be paid attention when preparing a powerpoint presentation? What would be the stage and seating arrangement?, how to plan presentation from beginning to the end?, how to take feedback in order to be more successful?

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*Keywords:* Effective presentation techniques, plan of the presentation, control of the excitement, body language, when preparing a presentation what we must pay attention, pay attention, stage and seating arrangement.

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## 1. Introduction

In the 21st century, presentation methods have become one of the essential requirements of daily life with respect to social and individual necessities. The primary reason for it being essential is the dizzying development of communication technologies. At the same time, accessibility, speed and growth in the means of communication among people and among the countries around the world have caused presentation methods to become a part of our daily life. Since they make the speech more vital and easy to deliver, presentation methods are widely used in all fields. Nowadays large companies organise presentation trips called Roadshows, during which three or four countries are visited and several presentations done in 24 hours(Karaağaç, 2009).

Although the concept of presentation seems to include basically all narration methods, today, it is better to be defined as presenting information by giving an effective speech before audience by using all means of communication technologies. All kinds of advertisements, conferences, panels, open forums, press conferences, tv programmes and even theatre and cinema are all means of conveying a message. However, when we mention 'presentation methods' we think of presentation methods and presentations that are done before a limited number of

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guests in a hall. However it is difficult to mark the differences among presentation methods. This paper deals with our limitations during the presentations which take place indoors and that are done before one or more groups or in front of a limited number of guests.

## **2. Effective and succesful presentation techniques**

### *2.1. Scientific background of presentation methods*

It is observed that many different fields of science have dealt with presentation and its methods. The most significant of the above mentioned fields is linguistics, which, throughout the history of mankind, has been interested in the concept of presentation and which has carried out numerous studies concerning the subject. The reason that linguistics and the studies related to linguistics being interested in presentation is that the main ingredient of a presentation is language.

The other sciences that deal with presentation are sociology, social pshychology and communication sciences. Undoubtedly, communication scientists, as well as linguists, sociologists and social psychologists, carry out studies and research concerning the matter using the methods which are used in communication(barcovision, slide, DVD, VCD, etc). These tools are also used in linguistics, sociology and social psychology. Another field of science that is interested in presentation is psychology. Especially, studies on perceptions have had and will continue to have a major effect on the development of presentation methods. Presentation and its methods are of interest to yet another field; graphic design, which makes use of computer technologies effectively. The use of computer technologies such as 3D modelling, makes the presentation more powerful and vivid(Alessi and Trollip, 2001, Kemertaş, 1999 and Stradling, 2003).

One of the basic issues at this point is that each field of science has its own point of view of the subject and this- instead of benefiting them-causes contradiction of the outcome of the studies that are conducted about presentation methods. The said contradicting results lead to confusion and have a negative effect on the development process of the methods. Another point to which we should pay special attention is that these sciences ignore one another and make an arbitrary definition for presentation and presentation method. However, the approach that needs to be adopted towards the issue should be an inter- and superdisciplinary approach. Studies carried out without the above mentioned context are either flawed or deficient. Ignoring other sciences' obtained data on the subject is clear evidence that these studies are misleading. Given the above example, searching for more evidence would be a needless effort. Our approach, however, is to carry out a superdisciplinary study, which enables us to embrace and co operate with all disciplines.

### *2.2. Structural integrity of presentation*

Presentation has a structural integrity, which contains small portions of the main idea of the topic presented. A presentation that does not have cohesion is complicated and difficult to comprehend regardless of its duration. Thus, the chances of giving a powerful and successful presentation decrease. All studies on brain's perception of things show that brain comprehends the smallest semantic code. Therefore the focal point in presentation should be the structural integrity(Russell and Norvig, 1995).

Presentation has its own structural sections, which are as follows ;

- a. *Introduction*
- b. *Body*
- c. *Conclusion*

#### *a. Introduction :*

It is the first and foremost interaction with the audience, for in it the topic is introduced in a way that it gets the attention and concentration of the audience. The reason for Introduction to be the most important part of a presentation is that the audience expects the information they are about to receive to contribute to their perceptions of things. One of the main reasons of the listener's breaking away from the presentation is his not grasping what is being presented and where it will go from there. That is why Introduction has to be carefully planned beforehand

(Çabuk, 2003, Leech, 2004). At the same time Introduction should cover 10% of the duration of the presentation. The standards, by all means, vary depending on the presenter, the topic, the target audience and the time the presentation is given.

*b. Body :*

It is the section which holds the main idea of the presentation. The body of a presentation should include five main points :

1. What is the problem that caused the need for presentation?
2. What are the solutions offered for the problem?
3. What sources and tools are offered for the suggested solutions?
4. If the suggested solutions are put into practice how will the current situation be like in the future?
5. What are our expectations from the audience?

The information presented in the body section, if presented effectively, will contribute to the conviction process of the audience. Studies show that a successful presentation is the one which convinces the audience and which has an effective structural integrity (Bradbury, 2006).

*c. Conclusion :*

One of the most important phases of conclusion is summarization. In it, the presenter runs down a brief summary of the things he has mentioned in the body section of his presentation. In order for the information to be effectively conveyed, the summarization is a must have. That way the audience will not have any questions or obscure points left in mind.

Another phase that should be included in the conclusion part is the Question & Answer session. It serves the purpose of understanding if/how much of the message has been comprehended by the audience, and also enables the presenter to get feedback. Question and Answer session is an opportunity to clarify any possible questions in listeners' minds as well as convincing them of the topic presented. This will be dealt with in detail later. One of the crucial points in conclusion is bonding. The presenter should bond with his audience and neatly plan his closing according to the quality of the target group.

*2.3. Methods for an easily perceived presentation*

Perception has been one of the most important concepts that scientist have been working on thoroughly. Studies show that the time course of perception is relatively short compared to the improvement of the ability to perceive, which is quite complicated in nature. Having this data at hand enables us to develop presentation methods (Stillings and others, 1995). The things that need to be done to make the presentation easily understood can be grouped as follows :

*a. Working on the text of the presentation.*

*b. The points about presentation methods that should be taken into consideration.*

*a. Working on presentation text:*

Revising the text neatly and carefully is one of the main requirements of a good presentation. Since the spoken word is easily forgotten, the listener might not be able to follow the speech and therefore might feel uneasy, which is a common anxiety in societies. In order to avoid that, the presenter should repeat the main idea of the presentation from time to time during his speech.

Another point which we should apply to the presentation text is illustration. The presenter should support the abstract concepts with as many concrete examples as possible. Telling a story related to the topic of the presentation will make it easy for the listener to follow and understand what is being presented. This is called crystalization of science.

The relevance between the vocabulary used in the presentation text and the target audience is another important point. The presenter has to be aware of his audience's vocabulary and should avoid using phrases that are culturally remote to them (Bienvenu, 2008). If the language is above the cultural level of the audience, it will make the presentation complicated and hard to follow. If it is below the cultural level, the presentation might seem light and mediocre (Fonesca, 2006, Fisher).

The use of common sayings and phrases will make it easier for the audience to grasp the abstract concepts and will be more effective in conveying the message(Stillings and others, 1995).

*b. The points about presentation methods that should be taken into consideration :*

The topic of development of presentation methods with the help of computer technologies was mentioned earlier in this paper. The hall in which the presentation is given, is important, as it plays a key role in the process of motivating, convincing and elevating the attention of the audience. Hence, the lighting and organization of the interior are of equal importance. Organizing the interior of the hall properly has even become an area of expertise. In order to prepare the audience mentally and emotionally, arrangements associated with the topic of the presentation are made, such as an exhibit at the entrance to the hall. The organization of the interior is primarily based on the number of guests and the seating order, which are proportional to one another. Placing posters around the hall related to the topic is one of the key elements that might help raise the attention and awareness level of the audience during the speech and during breaks.

Another major point of concern related to presentation methods is using slide shows effectively. The colour of the slide, the visuals included in slides, diagrams as well as the font size and the target audience's perception qualities have to be taken into consideration and the presentation has to be prepared accordingly(Tuovinen, 2003). The number of words in sentences, the correlation between human perception and the visuals that hold the message are crucial points that have to be dwelled upon carefully. There are significant scientific studies concerning the above mentioned subject(Bradbury, 2006 and Öngör, 2010).

Some of the important materials used during the presentation include layouts and diagrams. Said elements have to be clearly comprehended by the target audience and they also have to support the main idea of the presentation. Having said that, the pie charts included in the graphics have to be as plain as can be in order for the audience to understand them clearly. If the target audience is knowledgeable about the topic presented, the graphics can be detailed. Also the number of pie charts included in the graphics can be reduced or increased in accordance with the audience's cultural and informational background(Stradling, 2003).

One of the crucial points in presentation methods is reinforcing abstract concepts with visual material(Hanson, 2001). Visual material helps the audience grasp the main idea perceptibly(Gökdağ, 1996 and Gourlay).

In terms of presentation methods, simulation is the most commonly used method nowadays(Arwood and Kaakien, 2009, Baudrillard, 2003 and Kincaid and Westerlund, 2009). It is widely and professionally used for advertisement and propaganda purposes. The aim of simulation is to draw the audience into a virtual environment, which is in fact closest to reality(Bostrom, 2003 and Bergen and Chang, 2005). This is a powerful, yet risky method(Demir, 2001 and Goldsman and others 2009). If the presentation is not in line with ethical values, the audience might be misled and therefore offended(Bergen and Wheeler, 2009, Padhi, 2007 and Yılmaz, 2007). Today many computer programs help the presenter to prepare a presentation using 3D modelling. All these techniques will contribute to the presentation and help the presenter convey the main idea poignantly(Hanson, 2001 and Gökdağ, 1996). Among the most developed equipment is the smart board. It is commonly used in presentation methods, which makes the presenter be able to make improvised designs.

*2.4. Post presentation :*

Post presentation is the phase dealing with the evaluation of the desired effect of the presentation on audience. It can be analysed in two ways :

1. The first one is to give the opportunity to the audience to participate in the Question and Answer session held right after the presentation. In this session, the questions asked by the audience hold signs of how much of the main idea –if any- has been understood. The feedback received from the audience enables the presenter to correct his errors, clarify or complete the incoherent parts of his presentation. Aside from that, the Question and Answer session is a good way of self-evaluation for the presenter. That way he can benefit from the criticism he received from the audience.
2. The second one is doing a survey after the presentation. By looking at the survey results, the presentation can be evaluated (Bienvenu, 2008) However, it is sometimes an incomplete evaluation method, for it lacks sufficient data to decide whether the audience adopted the desired manner or whether the presentation has been a success

or not. The reason behind the possible incompetence of the survey results could be the emotional responses given to the questions asked in the survey. Hence, evaluating whether the audience has adopted the desired behaviour can only be fulfilled by getting feedback one week after the presentation. Only then can the results of the survey, the Question and Answer Session and the feedback be merged to get a healthy evaluation. Especially in advertising and promotion businesses, a successful evaluation will objectively produce structural achievement.

### *2.5. The location and body language of the presenter :*

Effective use of body language is one of the important points that needs to be considered during the course of a presentation. It has become a separate applied science.

At the outset, the focal point has to be the location of the presenter. If the presenter is to give his speech on a podium with a microphone, the height of the podium has to be in accordance with the height of the speaker. The President of France, Sarkozy is attentive to the issue and stands on a custom made stool while delivering a speech on a podium. There has to be a matching proportion between the presenter and the podium or the table in front of him. That way, the presenter will feel comfortable using hand gestures, intonation, stress and articulation. If the speaker is to give a speech without standing on a podium, he has to be well informed of the specifics of doing a presentation on stage. He has to adjust his mimics, hand gestures, intonation and stress accordingly (Gronbeck, and others 1990).

Studies on body language show that certain behaviours have negative effects on the audience. These behaviours include; playing with jewellery, playing with buttons of clothes, licking lips time and again, playing with hair and standing the same position (with parallel legs) for a long time. A speaker with the above mentioned behaviour has a negative effect on his audience. Another thing studies show is that, a presenter staring at one point or person in the hall or leaning on the podium or table while talking, also have an unfavourable effect on the listeners (Gronbeck, and others 1990).

Anxiety management is also one of the most important issues that needs to be dealt with while giving a speech. However, here management does not mean spiriting away the excitement but keeping the excitement under control and reflecting it to the speech. It should not be forgotten that a speech which lacks enthusiasm is bound to fail.

Giving a speech that has emotion, sincerity and enthusiasm in it is one of the key factors in convincing the audience. Because of the lack of enthusiasm in television or radio talks, they often sound mechanical and unnatural. That is the reason why the power of face to face interaction still exists today in spite of the huge growth in communication technologies.

There are many ways to cope with the anxiety of giving a speech. All these methods are directly associated with body language and psychology. Anxiety during a speech causes:

- a. Unnatural and involuntary movements of mouth and face.
- b. Unnatural and involuntary movements of hands and arms.
- c. Unnatural and involuntary movements of legs and of body in total.

These involuntary movements vary according to different psychological and biological reactions of speakers. Thus, the speaker must be completely aware of his own body's negative reactions when anxious. Therefore, it has to be known that anxiety management can be grouped as two major points, the first of which includes the preparations that need to be made before the presentation. The second one is the steps that should be followed during the course of the presentation. These points are dealt with in detail in the training programme for an effective presentation.

## **3. Conclusion**

In order to keep the concentration and attention of the audience high and to be able to convey the message clearly, one needs to be an expert in certain aspects of giving a successful presentation. Studies show that for an idea to be approved and accepted by the audience does not only depend on its content but also how it is presented. Regardless of the quality of your idea, if it is not presented in a right and effective way, the audience will be more than likely to be dissatisfied with your presentation. At this very point, presentation skills gain importance in the light of convincing the audience with the help of technological devices and carefully used body language.



In conclusion, in order for a presentation to be more effective and successful, it needs to include several important points such as, clarifying the obscure by crystalization, utilizing visual material (Pictures, Videos, Graphics, Simulations, Sounds, Cartoons, Models, Maps, Diagrams etc.), establishing emotional contact with the audience (making eye contact to have the listener feel important), arousing curiosity, repetitive usage of key words related to the main idea, using provocative words, sayings, anecdotes, mottos, phrases or slogans, using tricks in speech styles (90-60), keeping the audience alert, maintaining logical flow, using clear language, simplifying data, being specific, dramatising, citing authorities, using body language properly, following the latest developments in presentation methods, adjusting the colour, visual material and caption when using Powerpoint slides and using them properly i.e.; inserting key words in the captions in order to clarify the main idea of the presentation, avoiding reading the captions only, being eloquent and adjusting the tone, making good use of the stage, following the questions asked during the presentation, answering the same questions without ignoring them, trying not to be defensive when encountered with snide remarks and avoiding entering a dialogue with anyone during the presentation. Also it is important to be friendly with the audience in order not to be seen as a snob, never underestimating the audience's knowledge of the subject is also crucial as well as trying to give the audience the opportunity to actively participate in the discussion, preventing one or more listeners from dominating the debate, asking clear and relevant questions and lastly helping the audience to understand the message and establishing a feeling of confidence in the listener. Some other important points in doing a successful presentation are playing soft music in the background, using scent, the proper arrangement of lighting and seating order and the location of the podium and the microphone. The feedback obtained by the surveys carried out after the presentation is important in order to fill the possible deficiency in the presentation. It also sets the ground for the presenter to obtain more successful results from the presentation.

To conclude, no matter how solid a presentation is in terms of impressing and convincing the audience, if it lacks quality and fails to meet the needs of the audience, it fails to satisfy the target group. Among the above mentioned points, the quality of the message is the most important. A presentation lacking good quality also lacks effectiveness. Unlike the general opinion of public, presentation is not a magic wand.

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